

# A CLUB FOUNDER ON THE IDEALS OF WOMEN'S CLUBS.

By Ellen M. Henrotin, President-General Federation of Women's Clubs.



If a woman were asked the question, "What would you prefer to have accomplished as a monument to yourself?" perhaps eight out of ten would respond by naming some institution which they would like to found or be connected with. The other two, if modern women, would perhaps say, "I should like above all to have been instrumental in founding an active woman's club, with its various departments of thought and activity, because

the effect on the community of such a club is never ending, and its members have the true spirit, toward ever increasing usefulness, not only to the individual but toward the locality in which it is situated. A founder's day has become a feature in most of the clubs of the country, and on April 17, in Evanston, a university town situated on the lake shore about nine miles from Chicago, the Evanston Woman's Club held its annual meeting, which was also the retirement, from the presidency of the founder of the club, Mrs. Elizabeth Boynton Harbert. The club was organized in March of 1889, at a meeting held at the residence of Mrs. Harbert, who was elected president, and to her personal inspiration, enthusiasm and executive ability the club owes its present status of healthful activity and wide influence. Until 1890 the meetings were comparatively informal, but the increasing growth in membership rendered it necessary to perfect a formal organization, though the club still met at the residence of the president. In the very early history of the club the interest of the members was awakened in education by an address given by Colonel Parker, of Englewood, on the relation of the child to the school and the home. At that time Colonel Parker was a pioneer in the new education, and the interest which his lecture excited in the club members did much for the cause of education in the town.

In December of 1892 the limit to membership was removed. The club at that time numbered 250. The Evanston Boat Club, which owns a beautiful building on the lake shore in which is an assembly hall, tendered the use of the hall to the club, and there the meetings are held. No more ideal spot could be selected. The clubhouse is built on the shore, part of it projecting into the lake, and the great rooms with open fires are as delightful in winter, with its views over the almost arctic ocean, as in summer. The club is now forming a permanent fund to build a clubhouse of its own which will serve as a general meeting place for different organizations of the city. The club is divided into three departments—household economics, philanthropy, art and literature. Under the department of household economics a thorough study of domestic science has been inaugurated. The department of philanthropy assisted in building the Emergency Hospital of Evanston, contributing toward the building fund the sum of \$3,000, and this department has also sustained a sewing school, where women and girls have been taught plain sewing and to cut and fit their own garments, the club paying the salary of the teacher, who is assisted by the club members, and necessary apparatus to those too poor to buy it themselves.

Mrs. Harbert's parting address was on the "Aims, Accomplishments and Ideals of Women's Clubs," and the address is to be published, and I trust will be very widely distributed. Two suggestions of the address are to my mind of the greatest importance. One is, "What can women do toward securing a higher and more healthful class of amusements for the people?" the other, "The moral influence of national festivals, and the possibility of a woman's club festival day, in which the heroes of peace, together with the wives and mothers of great men, should receive honor." Mrs. Harbert says:

"I will ask you for a moment to consider the suggestion in regard to the national festival. Our great poet-philosopher, Emerson, stated that he considered the essay entitled 'Festivals—their power as a means to moral culture,' read by Mrs. Mary Newbery Adams, one of the wisest and most valuable messages voiced by an American woman. If beauty is the smile of God, should we not undertake to speed it on its errand, and can we estimate the results if all the women's clubs of the country would devote one day in the year to a great festival of joy and beauty to which every child in the respective districts should be summoned? This day should be held in the Spring, and every little girl should have that one desire for a white dress gratified, when to melody and song should be planted trees and vines and flowers; when heroic deeds of peace should be recognized, and those who have rendered helpful service receive grateful recognition. During the century of our national existence but one statue has ever been erected by public contribution to the memory of a woman, and very, very few, Mrs. Harbert might have added, to the memory of the heroes of peace. "The statue erected to a woman is that of Margaret of New Orleans, the children's friend. Not yet in these United States has the flag been lowered at half mast by order of the Government to the memory of a woman. Our Presidents go to the Capitol attended by men, yielding to men the first places of honor, while a seat in the gallery of the Senate is given to the wife of the President. These facts exercise a subtle influence upon men and boys. In Europe the son often sees his mother a queen, while at every fete or public function the princess receives an equal recogni-

tion with the prince, but not alone for the recognition for woman should this national festival be held, but that our poets, philanthropists and prophets and the heroes of peace and of home may receive recognition as have throughout the world's history the heroes of war."

Mrs. Harbert continues to draw a picture of an ideal city in which the churches were open every day for the use of lecturers and speakers, and in which organ concerts and orchestral music could be heard in the evenings, in which a large public library and lending library could be made the centre of the literary and social life of the city.

The ceremonies attending Mrs. Harbert's retirement from the office of the presidency which she has held so long were very simple. The incoming president presented her with a large bouquet of American Beauties, and the club gave her one of the most beautiful testimonials which was ever tendered by an association of women to their president. It was a fountain which is to be erected as a memorial to the club founder, and is to bear the inscription, "In Honor of Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, from the Evanston Woman's Club." This beautiful and gracious testimonial is a suggestion to clubs of women who desire to honor their founders, not with those monuments which men build for their own glory, but by one which blesses not only the givers but the community at large.

This suggestion of Mrs. Harbert's is one dear to my heart. Let me recall to your memory that scene in Rome where Dorothea explains to Will Ladislaw her mingled feelings of pleasure, perplexity and pain before the art treasures in the Eternal City. In her majestic, beautiful and serious young womanhood she represents the ideal of the nineteenth century, and she says to the man who seems the embodiment of modern art, "I should like to make life beautiful; I mean everybody's life. Then all this immense expense of art that seems somehow to lie outside of life and make it no better for the world, pains one. It spoils my enjoyment of everything when I think that most people are shut out from it." Will Ladislaw characterizes this sentiment as "the fanaticism of sympathy," but deep down in the heart of the world is the growing conviction that the true home of art is in the hearts of the people, that no artistic development is possible which does not rest on the appreciation and encouragement which it receives from them, and that if it is not a part of their daily life, it will always remain an exotic. There is undoubtedly a growing class in this country who encourage art, but what of the people? General intelligence is widely diffused, but culture is very rare among us. Only a wide social life can foster beauty and the arts, and this is the defect in the American scheme of life; it does not allow for pleasure. We talk to the citizen of his duties toward the State, but I have serious doubts if a nation can ever be well welded together which is not one in joy as well as one in duty; the lack of national festivals and holidays, the lack of the pageantry which is, after all, so great an assistance in making a community one in its life, is a serious lack in this country, and would it not be a beautiful mission for the women's clubs to put into the community life in which they are organized something of this larger social life and joy?

There never was an age when art and beauty were so necessary to the individual life. It is imperative to use every means to soften and elevate the masses of the people who are awakening to the knowledge of their own power and possibilities. Think of the lives passed in the tenement houses with a beer saloon or second-rate theatre for all diversion! What nobility of sentiment or grace of manner is possible to man, woman or child whose life is passed in such surroundings and who does not see a noble or beautiful thing from one year's end to another!

At the next biennial of the General Federation one of the evening sessions is to be devoted to the consideration of social life in all its phases, and Mrs. Harbert's beautiful address is full of suggestions which can be made absolutely practical for the discussion on that evening. ELLEN M. HENROTIN.

## Care for Your Shoes.

NEVER try to wear a shoe too small or that does not fit when you first put it on. There is no misery more distracting than a shoe that hurts the foot. Never let your shoes get hard and dry. Don't let them pinch the toes. Don't let the heels run down. Don't dry a wet shoe till you have rubbed it well with a flannel cloth and then with vaseline. Never put them near the fire. Half a peck of oats, kept in a small box, will be the very cheapest and best "boot tree" for a wet shoe. Fill the shoe and shake the oats down, after having rubbed and oiled it, and set in a dry place to dry gradually. When dry pour the oats back for further use. Do not "black upon blacking" more than a week at a time. Take a wet rag and wash the shoe at least once a week and oil over night to keep in good condition. Never handle patent leather until you have warmed it. Never wear rubber goloshes with good shoes. Put on old shoes in wet weather. There is no part of the apparel of a lady or a gentleman which should be more scrupulously neat, or that is so often scandalously neglected.

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